

Repent! Repent! Repent!

By David J. Stewart | July 2010 | Updated June 2017

Matthew 21:32, "For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not: but the publicans and the harlots believed him: and ye, when ye had seen it, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him."

The best way to interpret the Bible is to allow the Scripture to speak for itself. Concerning our text verse, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to Jesus to question His authority. Jesus rebuked them for their unbelief. They had heard the preaching of John the Baptist. They had seen the publicans and harlots believe on Jesus. Yet, the Bible says they repented not themselves.

Had they repented they would have believed. That is what Jesus said. Jesus didn't say they would have forsaken their sins or surrendered their lives to God if they repented. No, rather, Jesus said they would have BELIEVED on Him had they repented. Biblical repentance is *a change of mind* toward God, acknowledging the truth that we are a guilty sinner in His sight. Repentance is *a change of mind* from thinking wrong thoughts to BELIEVING the Gospel. The moment that an admitted sinner believes on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, believing that He died on the cross for our sins, was buried, and bodily resurrected 72 hours later, is born-again. It's that simple. 1st Corinthians 1:21, "For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." The man who believes has also repented. If you didn't repent, you'd never believe. [You Are Not Saved By Repenting, You Are Saved By Your Faith In Jesus Christ](#) (Pastor Danny Castle).



The Gospel of John mentions the word "believe" or "believed" 85-times, without ever mentioning the word "repent" even once. This is clear evidence that faith and repentance are inseparable, and that by believing on Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, one has also repented. Repentance is acknowledging one's sinnership in the eyes of a holy God—admitting that I am as dirty and guilty a sinner as God hath declared me to be in His Holy Word. The Law of God was given "that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God ... for by the law is the knowledge of sin" (Romans 3:19-20b).

It is wrong to teach that a person must repent first, and then believe second; that is a false doctrine. The Bible teaches that the man who believes on Jesus has also repented. They happen simultaneously. One who has turned to Jesus for salvation has also turned his back against sin. This is Biblical salvation, evidenced by the plain words of John 20:31, "But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name." You don't turn from

your sins to trust Jesus, you turn to Jesus to receive the gift of forgiveness of your sins. Amen!

Jesus **died** on the cross for our sins, was **buried** and is bodily **risen** (1st Corinthians 15:1-4). This is the Gospel (i.e., Good News). Jesus' grave is empty. We have a hope (John 16:33). Christ died, that's history; Christ died for me, that's salvation. If you repent toward God, through faith in His Son Jesus Christ, to be forgiven of your sins, then you ARE saved (Romans 10:13).

Dr. Jack Hyles 100% correctly and Biblically states concerning repentance...



“Repentance is not some little silly, 'I'm sorry.' Repentance is not simply a fear of God. Repentance is not a monk fasting and afflicting his body in a monastery. Repentance is not remorse because of sin's consequences.

Repentance is not penance performed before the pope as you kiss his toe... Repentance is not being sorry for what I've done wrong. It is not confessing one's sins to a priest. It is not just conviction of sin. It is not the signing of a pledge of abstinence. Repentance is that thing when you come before God and see yourself as you are, and see Him as he is, and say with Isaiah 'Woe is me, for I am unclean!'” —Pastor Jack Hyles (1926-2001), a quote from the timeless MP3 sermon, [THE GOODNESS OF GOD LEADETH TO REPENTANCE!](#)

The Gospel is not making a commitment to the Lord, nor is the Gospel amending one's sinful ways and forsaking bad habits. The Gospel is not accepting Jesus into one's heart, nor is it receiving Jesus as Lord and Savior. The Gospel is not praying a prayer, nor is it inviting Jesus into your life to stay. The Gospel is Jesus' DEATH, BURIAL and RESURRECTION according to 1st Corinthians 15:1-4. Beware of false prophets who come in sheep's clothing preaching [ANOTHER GOSPEL](#), ANOTHER JESUS and ANOTHER SPIRIT (2nd Corinthians 11:3-4).

The Simplicity That is in Christ

Jesus extends an open invitation to all humanity to come to Him for rest of the soul. Matthew 11:28-30, “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden

is light.” Now, if turning away from sinful behavior (or even a willingness to turn from sins) is required for salvation, then obtaining salvation becomes a very heavy burden. It is not a simple thing to turn away from sinful lifetime bad habits. That would be a very complicated plan of salvation, because it would require surrendering your life to serve God. And moreover, it certainly wouldn't be the free gift of God. **Romans 6:23, “For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”**

2nd Corinthians 11:3-4, “But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from **the simplicity that is in Christ.** For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him.” Getting saved has to be simple, otherwise stupid people couldn't do it. I say that kindly. There are some really stupid people in the world, who cannot figure things out very well. God made salvation so simple, and so easy, that even a little child can be saved.

Acts 2:41 tells us how simple it is to be saved. **Acts 2:41, “Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.”** It was the *Day of Pentecost*. This event happened fifty days after Jesus resurrected from the dead. Several thousand people attended the event from at least 16 different foreign nations (Acts 2:9-11). When they heard the apostle Peter preach the Gospel, they simply BELIEVED what they heard and were saved.

We see this truth confirmed in **Galatians 3:2, “This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?”** The apostle Paul is writing with concern for their souls, because heresy has crept into the church. Paul says he only wants to know one thing of them... “How did you become indwelt with the Holy Spirit?” That is, “How did you get saved?” Every born-again believer has the Holy Spirit of God living within their body (1st Corinthians 3:16-17; Romans 8:9; 1st John 3:24). So Paul ask them, “Did you obtain the Holy Spirit by doing the works of the law; or by believing the Gospel when you heard it preached?” Isn't that beautiful! Thus, here again we see the clarity of the simplicity that is in Christ. Anyone who receives Christ's sacrifice on the cross as full-payment for their sins, believing that He was buried, and then raised up from the dead 72 hours later, is saved immediately, irrevocably and permanently. Salvation is not doing your best, it is having Christ's best put to your account through receiving Him by faith. God will not save anyone who is trying to be saved, He will only save those who are trusting to be saved. Eternal life and forgiveness of sins is the gift of God.

Misrepresented Preachers

Now let me say, many mighty preachers of the past have been horribly misrepresented, because Lordship Salvationists today are desperate in an attempt to prove their false doctrines. Since they cannot use the Word of God to prove their lies, they have no choice but to use secondary authorities. But they're a bunch of lying, good-for-nothing, scoundrels, as I will show you.

Here's a quote that is often used to claim that Charles H. Spurgeon taught Lordship Salvation...

"There must be a true and actual abandonment of sin and a turning unto righteousness in real act and deed in every day life. Repentance, to be sure, must be entire. How many will say, Sir, I will renounce this sin and the other...but there are certain darling lusts which I must keep and hold? Oh, sirs, in God's name let me tell you, it is not the giving up of one sin, nor 50 sins which is true repentance. It is the solemn renunciation of every sin."

SOURCE: Charles Haddon Spurgeon, "Turn or Burn," *Music Hall, Royal Surrey Gardens*, December 7, 1856.

Now it sure seems like Spurgeon believed in Lordship Salvation, right? Well, nothing could be further from the truth, as this quote by Spurgeon himself plainly proves...

"You must not expect that you will be perfect in 'repentance' before you are saved. No Christian can be perfect. 'Repentance' is a grace. Some people preach it as a condition of salvation. Condition of nonsense! There are no conditions of salvation. God gives the salvation himself..." —[Pastor Charles Spurgeon](#)

SOURCE: <https://www.spurgeon.org/resource-library/sermons/the-repentance-unto-life> (Charles Spurgeon, from sermon #44 titled, *THE REPENTANCE UNTO LIFE*, preached at the *New Park Street Chapel*, Southwark, on September 23, 1855)

There you have it! Charles Spurgeon certainly did NOT teach Lordship Salvation. In the earlier quote, Spurgeon says that a sinner must renunciate every sin, i.e., acknowledge one's self as being a guilty sinner before God. But do you see how a dishonest modern minister can misrepresent a preacher from the past, who is dead and cannot defend himself?

What Did Pastor Charles Spurgeon Believe Concerning Repentance?

You're going to find a lot of quotes by mighty men of God from decades and centuries past, taken out of context on the internet. By themselves, most of the quotes would seem to evidence that a preacher was supportive of Lordship Salvation; but as I just proved to you, a man can quite easily be misrepresented.

I am very careful when I expose someone as a false prophet. Evangelist Ray Comfort clearly teaches that a person absolutely must stop committing sins or they can't be saved. He teaches in *The Evidence Bible* that the unsaved religious people sent to Hell in Matthew 7:22-23 weren't saved because they hadn't given up all their sins. But he foolishly leaves out verse 21 that tells us why those religious people went to Hell... because they failed to do the will of the Father, which according to John 6:40 is believing on Jesus Christ. Christ-rejecters go to Hell; not people who have faith in Christ, but don't stop living in sin. Ray Comfort's Gospel is all wrong!

Search the Scriptures

Jesus said to beware of the leavenings of the Pharisees. What did He mean? **Matthew 16:12** tells us, “**he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.**” Jesus was warning His disciples concerning the teachings of the Pharisees and Sadducees. Just as a loaf of yeast dough will expand as it rises, overtaking anything in its path, so will false doctrine grow and overtake one's life if you're not careful.

False doctrine will corrupt you. This is why I will not attend certain churches. Now I love Baptist churches, and I'm an Independent Baptist myself; but some of them are corrupt. I recently visited a Baptist church where the pastor quoted Pat Robertson and praised Rick Warren. I couldn't get out of there fast enough! I want a pastor who walks with God for six days out of the week, and then teaches me on the 7th what he learned during the week. I don't want some rascal who read a book by Rick Warren, watched a show by Pat Robertson, and then wants to corrupt my mind with heresy on Sunday. No thanks! Jesus said **SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES** in John 5:39. Most pastors are searching everywhere else!

Dr. John R. Rice

Dr. Rice was the founder of the *Sword of the Lord* (1895-1980), and Dr. Curtis Hutson (1934-1995) was his predecessor. Some Bible students claim that Dr. John R. Rice taught Lordship Salvation...

“To repent literally means to have a change of mind or spirit towards God and toward sin. It means to turn from your sins, earnestly, with all your heart, and trust in Jesus Christ to save you.”

SOURCE: [*What Must I DO To Be Saved*](#), by Dr. John R. Rice

Considering this quote by itself, one could be misled to believe that Brother Rice was teaching *Lordship Salvation*; BUT, he certainly is not. Dr. Rice goes on to state...

“The change in your heart, sinner, is God's part and you may be sure He will attend to that. Your part is to simply believe in Him. Whatever else is necessary in your eternal salvation, the Lord attends to when you trust in Him, or believe in Him.”

SOURCE: [*What Must I DO To Be Saved*](#), by Dr. John R. Rice

Did you read what Dr. Rice said?, “The change is in your heart...” This is exactly what Bro. Hutson and Pastor Hyles taught. Salvation is of the heart; not of works. Salvation is of God, not man. Our part is simply to believe, but it is God who changes our heart as we grow in grace (1st Peter 2:2). Lordship Salvationists demand instant growth like a [Chia Pet](#) (just add water).

Dr. Rice further states...

“One who believes in Christ has repented.”

SOURCE: [What Must I DO To Be Saved](#), by Dr. John R. Rice

This statement alone by Dr. John R. Rice clearly shows that he didn't believe in Lordship Salvation! Here is a quote from Dr. Curtis Hutson, with a quote which he provides from Dr. John R. Rice...

In an article in THE SWORD OF THE LORD, Dr. John R. Rice said:

"Sometimes the preacher does not himself fully understand the plan of salvation. He thinks of salvation as a process. First, there is a period of conviction, then a period of repentance, then an act of faith."

He [Dr. John R. Rice] went on to explain that when one trusts Christ as Saviour he also repents.

Dr. Rice is absolutely right. Faith and repentance are the same; they are not two separate decisions. One cannot trust Christ as Saviour without repenting or changing his mind. The very fact that he trusts Christ for salvation shows that he has changed his mind regarding sin, salvation, and God.

If one book of the Bible had to be considered "the salvation book," it would have to be the Gospel of John. The Gospel of John is printed and distributed more than any other book of the Bible. The purpose of this book is given in John 20:31, "But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name."

According to this verse, the whole purpose of the Gospel of John is that men might believe that Jesus is the Christ and believing they might have life through His name. In other words, it is written that men might be saved. Yet "repent" or "repentance" is not used one single time in the Gospel of John. On the other hand, "believe" is used more than ninety times in the twenty-one chapters.

SOURCE: [Repentance: What Does the Bible Teach?](#)

Curtis Hutson and John R. Rice are 100% in AGREEMENT on repentance! Dr. Rice further states...

"Repentance is inseparable from faith. The Greek word for repentance in the Bible simply means a change of mind; that is, a wholesome change of attitude toward sin and toward God. One who turns his heart to trust in Christ has, naturally, turned his heart away from the love of sin."

SOURCE: *Dr. Rice, Here is My Question...*; pg. 248, by Dr. John R. Rice, *Sword Of The Lord Publishers*; ISBN: 0-87398-158-8

Let us ponder the words of Jesus, who said in John 6:37, “...*him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.*” Any sinner who sincerely wants to be saved, may be saved, if he'll simply come by way of the precious blood of Jesus.

I also want to quote Dr. John R. Rice from his excellent book, “Dr. Rice, Here Is My Question...”, page 248:

“Question 200. Is repentance still necessary to salvation?”

Repentance is inseparable from faith. The Greek word for repentance in the Bible simply means a change of mind; that is, a wholesale change of attitude toward sin and toward God. One who turns his heart to trust in Christ has, naturally, turned his heart away from the love of sin ... It is a mistake to make a process out of salvation with repentance and faith as separate steps. They are really different parts of the same step or different ways of speaking of the same attitude of heart. One who repents, that is, has turned from rebellion and unbelief to trust Christ, has believed, of course. One who trusts in Christ has necessarily turned his heart from rebellion and rejection of Christ and so has repented.”

SOURCE: "Dr. Rice, Here Is My Question..."; ISBN: 0-87398-158-8; copyright, 1962, by Viola M. Walden

I agree with Dr. Rice 100%. Don't miss what he said... “The Greek word for repentance in the Bible simply means a change of mind; that is, a **wholesale change of attitude toward sin and toward God.**” Brother Rice doesn't define “repentance” as turning from the act of committing sin, nor even as a willingness to turn from the act of sin; but rather, as simply a change of attitude towards one's sin and the Savior. This is Biblical repentance. If you know you are a GUILTY sinner, condemned under God's holy Law, deserving of hellfire; and you believe on the Jesus Christ, you will be eternally saved. Romans 3:19 tells us that the Law was given that all the world might become “GUILTY BEFORE GOD.”

Conclusion of the Matter of Repentance

There are many critics these days who attack soulwinners who are getting the job done. They accuse us of teaching “easy-believism.” Bless God it's easy to be saved... you come as a SINNER and you BELIEVE THE GOSPEL! It's that simple. The Gospel is not difficult as some try to make it. [It's easy to be saved](#). Christ died on the cross for our sins! Amen. Do you believe that? Do you believe that Jesus, Who was buried, bodily resurrected three days later and is alive now? Is that you only hope for Heaven? if so, you are saved. You are a child of God. Unsaved people are children of the Devil (John 8:44; Romans 8:9; 1st John 3:24).

Here is the best quote that I've found on repentance, by Dr. Harry A. Ironside (1876-1951):

"Which comes first, repentance or faith? In Scripture we read, 'Repent ye, and believe the gospel.' Yet we find true believers exhorted to 'repent, and do the first works.' So intimately are the two related that you cannot have one without the other. The man who believes God repents; the repentant soul puts his trust in the Lord when the Gospel is revealed to him. Theologians may wrangle over this, but the fact is, no man repents until the Holy Spirit produces repentance in his soul through the truth. No man believes the Gospel and rests in it for his own salvation until he has judged himself as a needy sinner before God. And this is repentance." ([Except Ye Repent](#), p. 16)

Again, Jesus rebuked the Chief priests in Matthew 21:32 for their unbelief. They had heard the preaching of John the Baptist. They had seen the publicans and harlots believe on Jesus. Yet, the Bible says they repented not themselves. They refused to believe! And why would they, for they refused to repent. Had they repented ([changed their mind](#)) they would have believed. That is what Jesus said. Jesus didn't say they would have forsaken their sins or surrendered their lives to serve God if they repented. No, rather, Jesus said they would have BELIEVED on Him had they repented. Biblical repentance is turning to God by faith in Jesus Christ, so that we may receive the free gift of eternal life and forgiveness of sins. It's that simple. Jesus doesn't forgive sins, He has already paid for our sins. Hence, we simply receive God's free gift of forgiveness by faith in Christ's death on the cross for our sins, His burial and resurrection three days later. Philippians 3:9, "And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." We are saved by God's [imputed](#) righteousness!!!

[The PROMISES of God](#)

[I Never Knew You](#) (.PDF file)

[John MacArthur's Deadly Gospel](#)

[John 6:40—The Will of God and Salvation](#)

[The One Thing That Determines Salvation](#)

"Now you either believe what God said about man, or what man said about God!"

—Pastor Danny Castle, a great quote from the timeless sermon, "[MEDDLING WITH GOD!](#)"

Proverbs 14:25, "A true witness delivereth souls: but a deceitful witness speaketh lies."

[Ye Must Be Born Again!](#) | [You Need HIS Righteousness!](#)

